Finding aid to the Johnathan Powk Papers on Carnaval San Francisco 1982-1994 SFH 561

Finding aid compiled by Katherine Ets-Hokin.
San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
2019
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URL: http://www.sfpl.org/sfhistory
Title: Johnathan Powk Papers on Carnaval San Francisco
Date (inclusive): 1982-1994
Identifier/Call Number: SFH 561
Creator: Powk, Johnathan
Physical Description: 2 pamphlet boxes, 1 oversized flat-box (2 Cubic Feet)
Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
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Abstract: From 1972-1977, Johnathan Powk was an art director for San Francisco PBS station KQED. From 1977-1978 he made his first trip to South America, which resulted in a long term relationship with Brazil and the first of many Canavals in Rio de Janeiro (1978) as an observer, participant and employee. His designs were used in the MECA CARNAVAL and SAMBA DA ALLEGRIA group of 1982 and subsequent years.

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Conditions Governing Access
The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Collections that are stored offsite should be requested 48 hours in advance.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Johnathan Powk Papers on Carnaval San Francisco (SFH 561), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance
Donated by Johnathan Powk on November 24, 2018

Related materials
Researchers are encouraged to see also SFH 560 Carole Deutch Papers on Carnaval San Francisco, and SFH 562 Sir Lawrence Washington Papers on Carnaval San Francisco.

Conservation Note
During processing, the entire collection was re-foldered and re-housed in acid-free folders and boxes. Some metal staples remain.

Biography
JOHNATHAN POWK: From 1972-1977, Johnathan Powk was an art director for San Francisco PBS station KQED designing graphics and sets for a variety of programs. From 1977-1978 he made his first trip to South America, which resulted in a long term relationship with Brazil and the first of many Canavals in Rio de Janeiro (1978) as an observer, participant and employee. He fell in love at first sight with the music, the color, the spectacle and costume!

In early 1979 upon returning to San Francisco, Powk met Edith Lavrik of EDRO Tours, a travel agent specializing in Brazil and well connected with the local community. Not only did she sell him a ticket back to Rio but she hired Powk to design the poster for the annual Brazilian Carnaval Ball she produced.

In 1980, Powk again joined forces with Lavrik doing PR and decoration for the event; this was where he first encountered Marlene Rosa Lima in the costume competition. Not long thereafter he also witnessed his first SF CARNAVAL (Dolores Park) and second Marlene sighting. This eventually led to a friendship and collaboration manifested in the MECA CARNAVAL and SAMBA DA ALLEGRIA groups of 1982 and subsequent years.

CARNIVAL SAN FRANCISCO: In 1979, Marcus Gordon and Adela Chu requested rehearsal space at the Precita Valley Community Center for their upcoming Carnaval parade to be held in Precita Park. Carole Deutch, the manager of the center, liked the idea, knew many of the participants and offered support. On February 25th 1979 the parade of approximately one hundred costumed dancers and a fifty-piece "bateria" (percussion ensemble), marched around Precita
Park three times, then entered the park for a finale. Hundreds of supporters and neighbors joined the celebration. Based on the enthusiasm generated by the parade, Chu and Gordon asked if Deutch would join them to organize a larger 1980 event. Seeing a unique opportunity to showcase local artists and combine diverse cultures in a new, innovative event, she enthusiastically agreed.

The Carnaval Committee first met in March 1979. There were six original members: Adela Chu (dancer/teacher), Marcus Gordon (master percussionist/music director), Pam Minor (Costume Bank), Sir Lawrence Washington (conceptual artist), Lou DeMatteis (photographer) and Carole Deutch. They named the event Carnaval San Francisco, and decided to create a multi-cultural, multi-tradition event that reflected the diversity of the bay area, with emphasis on artistic quality and community participation.

The 1980 Grand Parade on Mission Street and Festival in Dolores Park was a huge success. The parade had grown to include several contingents who displayed dazzling artistry and the Festival included staged entertainment and several booths. Over fifteen thousand people attended, filling the park and adjacent streets.

Tired of spending endless hours on logistics, Adela Chu, Sir Lawrence, Pam Minor and Lou Dematteis left the Committee to focus on personal Carnaval and creative projects, but continued to support the event. Gordon and Deutch were joined by Anne Milkie, who had initiated a Carnaval photographic exhibit at the Galeria de la Raza. Together with many committed volunteers, they expanded their vision and organization to produce the 1981 event.

Anticipating many thousands of attendees, the city would not allow a festival of that size in the Mission district. So, in addition to dealing with some disgruntled residents and increasing responsibilities, the organizers were given a new route and destination to manage, as well as new features and activities to organize. On Sunday, April 12th 1981, the Grand Parade marched through the Mission and merged into a packed Civic Center Plaza. The event had grown tenfold, beyond expectations. At least 50,000 people gathered, performed and celebrated.

In just three years, Carnaval San Francisco had become a huge popular event, acknowledged by citywide neighborhoods, institutions and the press. It had become a keystone for multi-cultural artists, community organizations and public institutions and was widely celebrated.

Sunday, April 25, 1982 - the Grand Parade and Festival were considered a major citywide event. The Mayor proclaimed Carnaval day, KQED produced a documentary, twenty-five contingents with elaborate costumes, musicians and floats paraded into a packed Civic Center Plaza. Over 100 thousand people gathered along the route and in the Plaza. Once again, the growth from one year to the next was overwhelming. The organization could barely keep up with demands and requirements.

By 1983, the event had outgrown the grass roots structure and minimally funded organization. In spite of their dedication, enthusiasm and skill, the small group could no longer satisfy growing structural and financial requirements.

After producing another massive event in 1983, Marcus, Anne and Deutch tried to recruit new leadership but, having no success, retired, leaving the decision about next steps to Mission Neighborhood Centers.

**Scope and Content**
The collection's scrapbooks include original costume designs including color sketches, and swatches of cloth. Scrapbooks also include photos, flyers and clippings.

**Arrangement**
The collection is arranged alphabetically and by date.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Carnaval San Francisco
Carnaval -- California -- San Francisco
Costume design -- California -- San Francisco.
Costume -- California -- San Francisco.

box 1, folder 1
oversize-box 1, folder 1

**Biography: Johnathan Powk 1972-1917**

**Carnaval San Francisco, Collateral**

**Scope and Contents**
Contains posters, flyers, original sketches.

box 1, folder 2
box 1, folder 3
box 1, folder 4-8

**Carnaval San Francisco: Misc. Costume 1989, 2001**

**Poster Concepts 1989-1990**

**Scrapbook: Samba da Alegria 1982-1986**

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box 2, folder 1  Scrapbook: Carnaval San Francisco, East West Shrine "Metamorph" 1986
box 2, folder 2  Scrapbook: Carvaval San Francisco Photos 1989-1996
box 2, folder 3-6  T-shirts 1982-1994